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Although there has been a great deal of publicity on the subject of our sick society and pollution and urban decay and overpopulation, there has been very little positive action in dealing with these problems. There has been no lack of conferences and commissions, but conditions become worse and worse.

A start can be made by tackling the sickness of our cities. According to Harper's magazine, the typical American workingman is uninterested in remote pollution and overpopulation problems, but he is bitter because his parks are unusable. Yet it is these people, affected by urban pressures, who will determine the quality of the environment by their votes.

The dehumanization of the urbanite is accelerating since the city parks of the U.S.A. have degenerated into territories of fearful human predators and the emotionally distorted. (San Francisco park police advise women, who plan to walk in the park, to bring along a big dog.) We must reclaim and alter these refuges in order that the city dwellers may be able to find occasional relief from the bleakness of their existence, and be re-educated to appreciate the natural wonders of the world.

To ensure that these urban oases do not retrogress again, we need a functional recreation philosophy. Flowers laid out in geometric patterns are an insufficient attraction. Parks should provide entertainment!

As a regular visitor of Zoological Gardens, I have always been impressed by the lack of rancor and the intelligent curiosity among the crowds that attend. Evidently zoos have an aura which elevates the human spirit. 3000 years ago, the Chinese called their zoos Gardens of Intelligence or Parks of Insight, depending on the translation. A zoo is surely the ideal place to inform the public about Environment because of their receptive mood.

The city zoos are thus on the right track, but fall far short of meeting the needs of the public. For instance, a number of neighborhood zoological gardens would be much more useful to the urbanites than a less accessible consolidated city zoo.

Owing to their dependence on public funds, most Zoo presentations are dreary. As a consequence, the Zoos fail to get the repeat visits that one would expect. Most of the pleasure and enlightenment that might be derived from observing the non-human life forms is unrealized.

I have often wondered what an entrepreneur could achieve with this form of enterprise. In order to gain first hand knowledge, I visited Zoos in Canada, Ireland, and England during April-May 1969. My tour seemed to confirm reports that there was a boom in Zoo building in certain countries. I was greatly impressed with the excellence of the private-enterprise zoos.

I returned from abroad convinced that the U.S.A. urgently needs many small inexpensive specialized Zoological Gardens. Because of your concern, I am hoping that you will consider financing a Zoological Garden that would serve as a model and an inspiration for others.

Since you did not solicit this letter, I have not submitted a detailed outline. Briefly, I do not have the common garden variety zoo in mind. This program will have some additional bonus benefits. For example, it will reduce visits to the State and National parks which are rapidly turning into slums.

Though I do not claim to have a panacea, I feel that my approach is infinitely superior to simple hand-wringing. Other approaches are being suggested and some seem to have merit. I like to think that mine will generate light without heat.

Of course, your reply to my letter will not obligate you in any way whatsoever.

Yours sincerely,
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